

REMARKS

Claims 5-8, 10, 12, 16 and 17 are currently pending in the application. Only claims 16 and 17 are in independent form.

The Office Action states that the declaration as filed is defective. Accordingly, a new signed declaration is attached hereto. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action states that the specification is objected to as failing to provide proper antecedent basis for the claimed subject matter. Specifically, the Office Action states that proper antecedent basis for the new terminology as set forth in claims 5-8, 10, 12, 16 and 17 could not be found on the specification. However, the term "mat" is set forth in the specification, namely in the title. Additionally, the term "cartridge top" is first set forth on Page 6, the bottom line and is then used throughout the specification for indicating the top portion of the mat. Further, the "moisture absorbance means" is set forth in the specification on Page 7, first full paragraph wherein the specification recites "the absorbent core." The barrier means is set forth in the same paragraph wherein the specification states "the core is sealed with a moisture barrier." The "base unit" is first set forth on Page 6, second full paragraph beginning "the base unit is secured" and is repeated throughout the specification. Accordingly, there is support for the terminology used in the claims and reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

The Office Action states that the Amendment filed June 22, 2001 is objected to under 35 U.S.C. § 132 because it introduces new matter into the disclosure. In order to further prosecution, this additional material has been removed from the application and from claim 17. Reconsideration

of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Claim 17 remains rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

The Office Action states that there is no reference in the specification concerning a "rigid" cartridge top. In order to further prosecution, the term "rigid" has been removed from the claims, thus rendering the present rejection moot. Reconsideration of the rejection is respectfully requested.

It is respectfully requested that the present Amendment be entered in order to place the application in condition for allowance or at least in better condition for appeal. The application is placed in condition for allowance as it addresses and resolves each and every issue that remains pending. The amendments overcoming the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112 are made exactly as suggested by the Office Action. The application is made at least in better condition for appeal, as the amendment removes many issues, thereby simplifying the issues on appeal. That is, each and every rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112 has been overcome exactly as suggested in the Office Action. Further, the claims have been amended to more specifically define the invention while raising no new issues which would require any further searching. Rather, the amendments have been made in view of comments made in the Office Action which clearly distinguish the presently pending claims over the cited prior art. Hence, it is respectfully requested that the amendment be entered.

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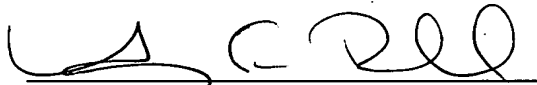
This Amendment could not have been made earlier as the amendment corrects issues and further defines over the prior art in accordance with the suggestion made in the outstanding Office Action, the suggestion first being made in the outstanding Office Action. Hence, since there remains no further issues to be resolved, it is respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered.

In conclusion, it is respectfully requested that the present amendment be entered in order to place the application in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is authorized to charge any fee or credit any overpayment in connection with this communication to our Deposit Account No. 11-1449.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF "EXPRESS" MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service "Express Mail Post Office to Addressee" addressed to the Assistant Commissioner for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, BOX CPA on September 18, 2001.


Marie M. DeWitt

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE SPECIFICATION:

[The cartridge-top 12 includes a rigid edge portion 20 for being disposed over and engaging the base unit 18. The rigid end portion 20 extends over the base unit 18 in engagement with the base unit 18. The base unit-18 correspondingly including a rim portion 22 which is able to mate with the rigid edge portion 20 of the cartridge-top 12. This rim portion 22 extends around the perimeter of the base unit 18, thereby providing a solid mating engagement with the cartridge-top 12 on all sides. The rigid edge portion 20 includes an internal tunnel surface that sits over and mates with the upwardly projecting rim portion 22 of the base unit 18 about the complete perimeter of the unit. This interconnection maintains the cartridge top 12 onto base unit 18 while allowing for easy separation and disposal of the cartridge 12. Also, it provides an excellent seated arrangement of the cartridge 12 in the base 18.]

CLAIMS:

17. (Twice Amended) A urinal or commode mat for protecting a restroom surface from spillage of liquids, said mat comprising:

a cartridge unit including

- (a) moisture absorbing means for absorbing and retaining liquid,
- (b) a [rigid] cartridge top disposed over and connected to said moisture absorbing means for collecting and draining liquid onto said moisture absorbing means,
- (c) barrier means disposed beneath and connected to said

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moisture absorbing means for preventing moisture escape from
said moisture absorbing means; and

a base unit [having a rim portion], operatively connected to [said
cartridge top of] said cartridge unit [including a rigid edge portion for
containing and engaging said rim portion to maintain said cartridge unit within
said base unit] and containing said cartridge unit.